

THE SPIRIT THAT WINS¹

II Kings ii, 9—"Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

THESE were the words of Elisha as he saw his master Elijah depart. They were a prayer; a prayer not that the new prophet may continue the methods of the old prophet, but that the new prophet may be richly imbued with the spirit—the spirit of earnestness—that has characterized his predecessor.

My theme is "The Spirit That Wins."

In every man there is what we call his "spirit." It is as different from the mind as it is from the body. Two men may have equally acute minds, similarly trained, and still each may exert an entirely different influence and be an entirely different personality from the other according to his spirit; one man's spirit may be hopeful, another's despondent; one's spirit constructive, another's destructive.

Spirit, too, is entirely different from a code of morals. Two men in business may have equally positive views of honesty, may have the same ethical perceptions and standards, and still they may be antipodes in the atmosphere they carry into trade and in the impression they make on tradesmen. One man may drive the customer from him, while the other draws the customer to him.

Spirit is the intangible something that flows in and around all mental processes, all moral ethics, and gives them a flavor and perfume.

¹ Baccalaureate sermon of the third commencement exercises of the Rice Institute, preached by James G. K. McClure, President of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, in the academic court at 9:30 o'clock Sunday morning, June 9, 1918.

It is really the determinative factor of character; it is the spirit of our thoughts rather than the thoughts themselves which makes us what we really are in the sight of God, and what we seem to be in the sight of our fellows. The matter of spirit is, therefore, of supreme significance to ourselves and to the world. What our spirit is shapes our procedure and decides our destiny.

A man's spirit has much to do with his acceptability to his comrades, with his power of coöperation, with his winsomeness. Other things being equal, in any association of men, it is the spirit, the spirit of fellowship and helpfulness that decides a man's standing and effectiveness.

Spirit, too, is a contagion. Nothing is more suggestive than the experience of Henry M. Stanley when he was sent into Africa to search for Livingstone. Having found him, he tarried with him day after day in close contact, not receiving a single word of instruction, but constantly being under the influence of Livingstone's spirit. In due time the man that had gone to Africa without concern for personal religion became, simply through Livingstone's spirit, a disciple of Livingstone's Christ.

What is true of spirit in an individual is equally true of spirit in an institution. Every institution has its distinctive spirit. There may be two homes equally well constructed, with all outside surroundings and inside appurtenances quite alike; but we go into one and we immediately feel the spirit of calm; we go into the other and we as speedily feel the spirit of turmoil. There may be two great church organizations, holding, as they claim, the same creedal faith and the same general principles of polity, both aiming for the same ends; and yet the spirit of one church gives encouragement to thought, and the spirit of the other represses thought. So in a college or in an institute there comes to be in due time

what we call "the spirit of the institute." Every student breathing it realizes that he has something different within him than exists in any other educational institution, perhaps in its love of truth, or perhaps in its fear to follow the leadings of truth.

What is true of other institutions is true also of a nation. Two nations may speak the same language, may use the same codes of law, domestic and foreign, may look to the same literary leaders for inspiration, and still the two nations may be thousands of miles apart in the distinctive spirit that molds and determines their life.

What is "The Spirit That Wins"? By winning I do not mean succeeding in any mere meteoric way. There is no implied thought of the powder flashing in the pan, bright for the moment, and then dark; but by winning I mean succeeding in some permanent manner that is worthy and noble, so that valuable results abide, and the results are of such a character that we can point to them with approval and feel that within them is the potentiality of eternity.

In the case of the individual there are four elements absolutely essential to this spirit that wins. The first is Genuineness. I speak of genuineness as a spirit. Back of our efforts of kindness, our professions of interest, our expressions of sympathy, there is something necessary to make them acceptable to others and profitable to ourselves, and that is the spirit of genuineness. Wherever there is an individual who in any of his relations to his fellows fails to be true to himself and true to them, there is a man who fails at the threshold of power. Whatever the origin of the word "sincere," whether it means "without wax," or "seen in the sunlight," this is certain, that in due time every one is known as sincere or not; face, manner, look, discover us. Here lies the distinction between the perfunctory and the genuine.

The child learns to distinguish between the service perfunctorily rendered by the hireling and the service rendered by the mother. In this life of ours, when there are the bright eyes of childhood and the bright eyes of students, they see immediately into the inner spirit of all our conduct, and if they find that back of words and deeds there is the hypocritical, there is the mere appeal to the galleries, there is the impulse of jingoism, doubt immediately fills the minds of these onlookers and they discount what we say and do.

The heart is not always to be worn on the sleeve, though I am convinced it should be so worn much oftener than it is if we are to comfort the sorrowful and if we are to give encouragement and cheer to the young. But when the heart is worn upon the sleeve, it must be the true heart. No one unless he is sincere in spirit can understand others. If he is deceitful himself, he will be full of distrust, and his judgment with reference to the promises and procedures of others will necessarily be false. This does not mean that we are always to tell everything that is passing within our hearts and minds; but when we do make expression, either in times of grief or in times of joy, we are under necessity of expressing the truth, for the fundamental element of character is truth, and only as truth pervades the individual can the individual be loyal to himself and loyal to the world.

The second element of "The Spirit That Wins" is Fairness. Lately the man who was formerly in charge of the Krupp Works in Germany, where Germany's great cannon and other munitions have been made during quite a series of years, gave to the world a statement with reference to a scene in the palace of the Emperor at Berlin—a scene that almost immediately followed the outbreak of the present war. The leading people of Germany had been invited by the Kaiser to accept his hospitality. Such an invitation is not

merely a request; it virtually is a command. When a person has accepted such a command, it is almost impossible for him to do otherwise than as his host may ask. At the conclusion of the meal, the Emperor arose and said, "Gentlemen, advance and as we grasp hands promise me that you will stand with me to the last breath." Such a request, in my judgment, was not fair; it was taking wrong advantage of a predicament. Fairness means that in any individual case all the facts of the person, his temperament and his surroundings, are brought into kindly consideration and are treated decorously. Fairness, indeed, is to call a thing black when it is black, and to state that a procedure is evil when it is evil. In fairness there should be no overlooking the fact of righteousness or unrighteousness. But fairness as a spirit means also that every element that enters into the situation receives its due heed. A young woman was singing in the quartette of a church in New York City when her voice trembled. The chairman of the musical committee of the church came forward at the close of the services to tell her that her singing was no longer desired because her voice had trembled. What were the facts? That morning the woman, a widow, had left her only child, a boy, in Brooklyn, upon a dying bed. She had come to the church to fulfil her engagement, irrespective of the fact that her boy was dying, because she intended to be faithful to duty; no word could be sent whereby some one could be secured in her place. No wonder, as she sang with her heart full of the thought of her dying boy, her voice trembled. Fairness in estimating every case takes all qualifying facts, all perplexities, all prejudices, all doubts, all burdens into consideration. Fairness as a spirit is always open to light, continues receptive to truth, never closes its judgment until it has ascertained with comprehensive vision everything that bears upon the situation.

It has no element of browbeating in it. It is "just" in the sense that it "gives to every man and every thing its due."

The third element of "The Spirit That Wins" is Magnanimity. Magnanimity is that great-heartedness which causes a man to look on the world without jealousy and without envy, and makes him willing to surrender his own profit that another may have advantage. It was magnanimity that caused Abraham, the father of our faith, to treat his nephew Lot, so much younger than himself, with generosity when the strife arose between the herdsmen of the uncle and nephew as to the occupancy of land. Abraham, in the grandeur of his nature, said, "You take what land you please, and I will take the rest."

Lately in Chicago a game of golf was being played. As two professors in an educational institution were pursuing the course, they came upon a man cutting sod, who inquired the hour of the day. Consulting their watches, they answered that it was fifteen minutes past five. The man's day had expired at five. As soon as he ascertained that by an error of calculation on his part he had spent fifteen minutes in over-work on his part he began to indulge in expressions of lament, and began to wonder how he ever could make up for those lost fifteen minutes. When the professors heard these expressions, their judgment was that the man would be a cutter of sod, and no more, all the days of his life.

But Mr. Edison tells us of some young students who were employed in his factory-works in New Jersey. When the hour for closing the factory came, three of these students, who had started a task, had assembled all their materials, and had reached a place where there was a little more work to be done in order to complete their task, stayed over their work until it was complete. The bell for noon rang; all

others went; they remained. Edison said, "Those three men will advance more and more in their development."

We often say that there are flowers that are "born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air"; but the statement is not wholly true. The very superabundance of the flowers, as we pass them on the prairie, or even as we do not see them at all, is an expression to us of the wonderful magnanimity of God. In more senses than one God causeth our cup to "overflow." His munificence is a constant appeal to us likewise to be munificent. God's heart is never niggardly, nor should our heart be other than superabounding in goodness. When it is in our purpose to render to this world "good measure, pressed down, and running over," there is something in us that in itself is sweet: and as that sweetness imparts itself to our spirit, it gives us power to go into life, securing victory in ourselves and victory in others.

The fourth element in this "Spirit That Wins" is the element of Burden-bearing. If you go to Naples, Italy, you will find men carrying upon their heads great baskets of grapes. Notice them. The burden causes them to stand erect, the shoulders are thrown back, they watch their step. It is burden-bearing that brings a man to his development, to his steadiness, and to his joy.

Some years ago I was on my way to Richmond, Virginia, and along the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad the train stopped at a cross-roads station. As I looked out of the window I saw a laboring man (the day was drawing toward evening) pushing his heavy wheelbarrow up a hill toward his home. His brow was furrowed, his form bent. He looked like a worried man. As I was watching I saw his two little children, clad in their cleanest and brightest

clothes, come around the corner of the hill, burst upon him with gladness in their eyes, and jump into the barrow. Immediately the man straightened himself up with a new elasticity and a new strength. His burden was his refreshment and his joy.

Yes, it is only when in life the superman becomes the subman, getting under life's burden in spirit, and later in deed, that he preserves his strength, secures his equipoise and develops progressive power. It is very noticeable that the heroes of our hearts, continuing as such year after year, are always life's burden-bearers. In due time every Napoleon must give way to a Pasteur. Admiration for the self-centred spirit fades, but admiration for the spirit of the burden-bearer ever increases.

Side by side with these four elements of "The Spirit That Wins," there must be indeed determination, courage, and the purpose of growth, so that when any of us has made efforts to entertain within him this spirit he sees to it that a grim will, an unceasing bravery and a desire to grow in ability likewise possess him. From the instant a man, thus endowed through his own self-choice, wins out, see what magnificent factors of power come into his very being! Such a man is in every respect a splendid character. All of us who know him are proud of him. Sooner or later every one who comes into contact with him does know him. Atmosphere is telepathic; so is spirit. We become aware, we feel, what is a man's spirit. It was this spirit that has determined for all time the place in human regard of Washington and of Lincoln. Both of these men embodied every one of these four elements of "The Spirit That Wins." If you and I are to be worthy of more recognition, if we are to answer to our potentiality, this spirit must win out within ourselves, and it

must win out with those who, being nearest to us, see deepest into the secrets of our being.

So far, I have spoken of "The Spirit That Wins" with reference to the individual. Now I speak of it with reference to the nation, our nation of the United States. As a nation we wish to win in this present war. We are determined to win. We believe that every virtue for which we stand as a nation is a virtue that needs perpetuation, a virtue that must be given opportunity to live. Our task is an immense one. Mankind is always in danger of relaxing from the ideal of an immense task. There are those who claim that if we should succeed in this war we would relinquish our idealism. They claim that if a man becomes in any sense a victor the element of the bully immediately takes possession of him. No such outcome must occur in our case. Accordingly we must be thoughtful not alone for the welfare of to-day; we must be even more thoughtful for the problems of to-morrow. Think for an instant of some elements of the task that is now before us. We are to endeavor to bring about a condition of affairs in international relations whereby there shall be willingness to coöperate in a system of courts seeking continual peace. Men may call this task visionary; may claim that it is utterly impossible of accomplishment; but to students of history who have seen savage tribes emerge from processes of direct retaliation of injury to judicial procedures, the task seems merely in the line of past development. The more difficult the task, the more interesting it is. If the task is a good one it appeals to all the finer and nobler elements of our being, it summons those elements to the front and calls upon them to be wise, and brave, and adaptive to circumstances and to need. The future of the world's his-

tory will give to us such an opportunity for study, for self-denial, for understanding, and for practical coöperation as has never been known in the history of humanity; and if we meet the situation aright, the generations that follow the present generation shall rise into larger and larger ascendancy and glory and worthiness. One great effect of the Napoleonic wars was to create the spirit of nationality. Since those wars that spirit has never died. Now has come this war, and out of it there must be a spirit of world-wide nationality. The brotherhood of all the peoples of the earth ought now, if we can properly meet the situation as it should be met, to be an assured thing. To this end our high idealism as a nation must be preserved in our hearts and lives, and must be perpetuated when excitement is past and the pressure of difficulty along the battle-line is gone. It is true that there never has been a task comparable to our task as it confronts the people of the United States. Our position is absolutely unique in the centuries and in our relation to other nations.

The question now is, What is the spirit that is to win in us and through us as a nation? First of all, it is the spirit of Genuineness. The day is past for secret treaties. The people are everywhere to know what is being done in the line of agreement with other nations. We must give our legislators and representatives full opportunity for the pursuance of quiet interviews. We must not demand information of them too speedily. Time is always required in matters of supreme moment. But when the time has passed and the facts have been concluded, then there must be perfect openness and perfect truthfulness.

Ah! you say, diplomacy has been of such a nature in past years that nobody will believe in the genuineness of diplomacy. I am well aware that I am speaking of what may

be called "Utopia." Every offer of peace so far made, according to the statement of President Wilson, seems to have had beneath it insincerity, the whole programme not being outlined, much being hidden. Even if there is delay, we should not do anything looking toward peace conclusions until everything is open and visible and can be judged. We must speak truth until people know that we speak truth. In matters of procedure it is absolutely impossible to prescribe methods. All that we can prescribe is spirit. Sincerity is to be our present, our continuous, our future spirit; and it is the only spirit that can possibly win, put our nation at the front and keep it there for all time, because truth, and truth alone, has in it the elements of permanency.

Then, too, if we are to win out we must have the spirit of Fairness. Here is this wonderful State of Texas, wonderful in its resources, wonderful in its people, wonderful in its possibilities. It is wonderful, too, in its extent. For many years I have kept in my study a diagram showing the dimensions in square miles of the different parts of the world—France, Germany, and each and all the States of our own country. Put these dimensions of Texas side by side with the dimensions of Rhode Island, and while on the diagram the dimensions of Texas are as large as the width of an octavo page, the dimensions of Rhode Island are but a single line. And yet here we are in the United States, coöperating in such a way that each State has its own two senators. This method of coöperation has been practised and has been found workable.

It is possible to give due recognition to smaller bodies; such bodies as Belgium, Bohemia, Serbia, must have their due place. The stories of their wrongs cut us to the heart. Young men in the institution with which I am connected have not heard from their homes in these lands for over two

years,—homes in which were their aged fathers and mothers, homes in which there were girls of fifteen, sixteen, eighteen. These men lie awake at night, and bring to us haggard faces in the morning.

Yes, fairness means that every nation shall have its chance to live and shall have its chance for trade, and that out of this seemingly chaotic condition there shall develop an order of brotherly fellowship which shall enable every nation in its own way to make its contribution to the common welfare of mankind. But think for an instant of what a spirit of fairness is absolutely necessary in order to such a magnificent result, so that greatness shall have its proper consideration and littleness shall also have its proper consideration. I am well aware that this spirit is not the spirit of Odin. The thought of Odin is that might makes right, and that the little exists for the great, but the spirit of our Christ is that only right makes might, and that the great exists for the little.

Then there must also be the spirit of Magnanimity. We have gone into this war unselfishly. There is a sense in which it is true that we are defending ourselves; but I will venture the assertion that the great proportion of Americans all through this period of war have had within their hearts, more predominately than themselves, the other peoples of the world for whom they would live, and for whom they would be ready to die. No, we do not mean to bring back anything in our hands; not a parcel of land, not a dollar of money. Oh, but you say, this too is Utopian, and none can believe in such magnanimity. But we must see to it that such magnanimity eventually will be believed in. It undoubtedly is the spirit of our people. There is much hopefulness in this fact. Only a great-hearted nation can possibly live. Small-hearted nations are bound to die. Any person on the face of the earth who claims that he exists that

all others may pay tribute to him is, according to both the laws of God and of history, a fool. Any nation that looks upon itself as heir to the subservience of other nations is on its way to suicide. Pride of any kind always goes before a fall. A nation inspired by pride is sure to perish. Magnanimity alone ensures stability. Strange as it may seem, it is absolutely true that the meek inherit the earth. "Great Babylon that I have built" foreshadows Nebuchadnezzar's downfall, as well as indicates his imbecility.

The fourth element of "The Spirit That Wins" is the spirit of Burden-bearing. It is perfectly marvelous what changes have come in our land as we have seen our stoop-shouldered youth arise in their manhood, stand upright, and develop into splendid personality. They had been lolling about in the easy-chairs of clubs; they had been indolent and self-centred; they had given themselves to the study of the style of the latest fashion; they had seemed to be mere dawdlers. But in an instant they had gotten under the burden, the burden of the world's redemption, and see now the magnificence of their appearance!

It would be a fatal thing if once again this nation should revert to the ideal that physical effort and material well-being are the ends of existence. If we should resume our talk of dollars, our talk of what we call refinement, our talk of luxury, we should deserve to perish. Now and hereafter, we must think and we must talk in the spirit of burden-bearing. It is this spirit which makes our men strong to do and bear, which makes our nation superb and exalted. So far as the burden-bearing sentiment becomes pervasive of society, it renovates and rejuvenates society. If we believe, and live the belief, that we as a people exist to lift up the fallen, to serve the world's needs, and to bring in the glory of the world's welfare, whatever the burdens thus entailed

upon us, we shall have the spirit that will cause us as a nation to win out now and to win out always.

We are determined to win. No price is too costly. Money is nothing. The severance of the dear home ties is nothing. On into the conflict we go undeterred, our faces set as a flint. All sorts of calamities may intervene; all sorts of discouragements, too. It may seem as though we are driven to the last wall; but at the last wall we will stand. We intend to sustain our courage. We are not afraid of the outlook. We are perfectly aware that there are certain things that live, and no one can take away their life from them; that righteousness is one of those things; that there is a purpose shaping this universe, and that no man can obstruct that purpose other than to his own destruction. We know that justice is to continue, and justice is to control. Animated by these thoughts, we purpose to be brave, cheerful, hopeful, wherever we are, and we are determined to go from strength to strength in our spirit.

There have been other nations that have lived and died. For their death there has always been a reason. "The Spirit That Wins" has not been dominant in them. They may have cherished it for a little while, but in due time they allowed it to disappear from their hearts, and accordingly they deserved to die. Let us not think that we are ever to die. We will not die as a nation if this "Spirit That Wins" is in us, and unceasingly and grandly controls.

MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS:

In any year it is a matter of supreme interest when persons like yourselves reach such a service as that of this morning—the baccalaureate service. In the name of God you have been addressed through the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now you are to go from this religious acknowledg-

ment into the world, each carrying one's individual temperament, and each possessing one's individual possibility of growth.

In this peculiar year I remind you that all of us are to be peculiarly thoughtful. Momentous problems face us, one and all. You must help solve these problems. Wherever you are, you will best influence mankind by what you are in spirit. That spirit will shape your thinking and will shape your expression.

Love this nation. Give to those who will look to you for guidance the ideas, the convictions, the information, that will enable them to grasp the significance of "The Spirit That Wins" in a nation. Enable them, if you can, to love this spirit and inspire them to perpetuate it.

When I first went away to college there was sent to me by my mother an extract from a paper, the heading of which was, "I will come home as honorable as I left, or not at all." It was a sentence from a boy's letter to his mother, written as he was going out into the untried experiences of life. That sentence was printed in italics at the heading of paragraph after paragraph, each paragraph indicating the special temptations, difficulties, and responsibilities that the boy might meet. "I will come home as honorable as I left, or not at all." I see these words to-day; they never have faded from my mind or heart. They put within me the resolve that I would be clean, that I would try to take into my being this "Spirit That Wins" as to-day it has been outlined, and they have been an inspiration to me from manhood until now.

You, too, are going out into the untried experience of life. I bid you pray, almost in the words that Elisha offered, the petition: "Let me have a double portion of 'The Spirit That Wins.' "

If you have this spirit, the life of each one of you will be of exceeding beauty, exceeding strength, and exceeding joy; the life of each one of you, too, will be of exceeding stimulation and blessing to the world. Therefore, I would have you pledge me as you stand here, pledge me in your heart, in these words: "I will come back to the Rice Institute in 'The Spirit That Wins,' or I will not come back at all."

May it be that a double portion of this spirit, now and forever more, may abide within you! Amen.

JAMES G. K. McCLURE.